

HEALTH

HAY FEVER

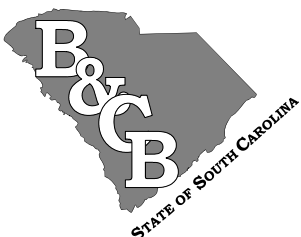
Despite its name, hay fever has nothing to do with hay or fever. A nineteenth-century physician called it this because he began to sneeze every time he entered a hay barn. Hay fever is actually a reaction of the upper respiratory tract to anything to which you may be allergic. The medical term for hay fever is “allergic rhinitis.” Hay fever is most common in spring and fall (when ragweed is particularly troublesome), but some people have it all year. The symptoms of hay fever are itchy and watery eyes, runny and itchy nose, congestion and sneezing.

Self-Care Tips

- Keep windows and doors shut and stay inside when the pollen count or humidity is high. Early morning is sometimes the worst.
- Dust and vacuum often. Wear a dust filter mask when you do.
- Use throw rugs that can be washed or dry-cleaned often. Don't use carpeting.
- Sleep with foam, cotton or other pillow that is made with an artificial fiber. Don't use a feather pillow. Wash pillows regularly. Replace pillows every 2 to 3 years.
- Totally enclose your mattress, box springs and pillows in allergen-proof covers. Wash mattress pads in hot water every week.
- Don't hang sheets and blankets outside to dry. Pollen can get on them.
- Try not to have stuffed animals kept in the bedroom. If you must, have only one. Make sure that the stuffed animals are one that can be washed. Wash it in hot water once a week.

For more self-care tips on hay fever or other allergies visit www.aanma.org or purchase a Health at Home Self-Care Guide from Prevention Partners for \$7.35. The Health at Home Self-Care Guide has a variety of health topics ranging from common health problems to emergency health conditions.

Source: *Health at Home*, American Institute for Preventive Medicine; 2000.



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South Carolina Budget and Control Board
Employee Insurance Program
May 2002

